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## MSCC Student Wins Silver Medal at National SkillsUSA Competition

Jake McHaffey of West Memphis, a gold medal winner in the state competition, earned a silver medal in CNC Turning Technology at the SkillsUSA National Championships this summer.

“I was kind of surprised and very happy I did that well,” said McHaffey, who is working toward a Renewable Energy degree. “The machine programming was more limited than what I am accustomed to, so I had some problems. But I figured that if was having that much trouble, somebody else must be having problems, too. I wouldn’t have been surprised to get fourth or fifth place, so second was really nice.”



The 2010 SkillsUSA Championships, a showcase for career and technical education students, included more than 5,600 high school and post-secondary participants in 96 different events. McHaffey and two other Arkansas students earned silver medals at the annual competition.

“Jacob is a great student, and when it comes to CNC Machining, he is very serious,” said Roy Germain, an Advanced Manufacturing faculty member at MSCC. “He prides himself on knowing as much about his profession as he can, and he is always willing to lend a helping hand.”

Instructor Kelly Bearden said McHaffey excels on several levels.

“He can jump from one machine to another with ease, and his work ethics are outstanding. He is always one of the first to volunteer to do a new process or learn a new procedure. He is always on time and ready for class, and he also has great leadership skills. “

Donnylle Hampton, Program Coordinator for MSCC’s Technical Center, described McHaffey as “an extraordinary young man.”

“He is both dedicated and determined,” she said. “Since his return from the national conference, he has not only volunteered to participate in the SkillsUSA competition again next year, but he has volunteered to serve as mentor to high school students who wish to compete. We are all very proud of him.”

A member of the National Technical Honor Society and Phi Theta Kappa International Honor Society, McHaffey said he enjoyed the challenge on the national stage, even if it came with some difficulties.

“It was interesting,” he said. “They gave us a piece of aluminum round bar, the easiest material in the world, besides plastic, to machine, and I made some alterations to the program to start the process. I couldn’t get everything to work the way I thought it should, and I began to run out of time.”

“I was just trying to get something done and turned in, but with two minutes left in the competition, the part kicked out of the spindle. I had to clean up my work station, so that was it. Something’s better than nothing, and I had something to turn in. Not being familiar with the machine, I did the best I could with what I had.”

He said some of his counterparts were not as fortunate.

“From what I saw and from what I heard when talking with other competitors, some of them had trouble with the programming and never even put a tool on a part,” McHaffey said. “It was a tough project. I’m not saying it would be impossible to do it 100 percent, but it would be a feat.”

McHaffey has been taking MSCC classes since high school. The son of a “shade tree mechanic,” he gravitated toward hands-on courses.

“It’s in my history,” he said. “I worked in a factory since I was 18, and it seems like I have always been on some kind of machine, either operating or doing maintenance on it.”

When not attending classes at MSCC, McHaffey works as a machinist at NKC of America in Memphis, a Japanese company that produces conveyor systems for vehicle manufacturers. He has a certificate of proficiency in CNC machine operation from Mid-South.

McHaffey hopes to parlay his machining experience and his renewable energy training (and possibly additional education) into a job working with windmills, hydroelectric/wave energy facilities, or biofuels.

He said MSCC has prepared him well for whatever the future holds.

“It’s been a really good experience. Everybody’s been very helpful. I would rather be here than anywhere else, and I would recommend this school to anybody I could go on for hours.”

For information about the renewable energy or machining programs at MSCC, please call (870) 733-6853. For general information about the College, please call (870) 733-6728, email [admissions@midsouthcc.edu](mailto:admissions@midsouthcc.edu), see the website at [www.midsouthcc.edu](http://www.midsouthcc.edu), or visit the campus at 2000 West Broadway, West Memphis.

Fall registration will be held Monday, Aug. 16, 9 a.m.-1 p.m., and Tuesday, Aug. 17, 5-6:30 p.m.